

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION/NUTRITION
Policy and Procedure

Number: 5.0
Effective Date: April 1, 1999

ENROLLMENT

Application and Enrollment Procedures

A. PURPOSE

The State Agency, as required by federal regulations, must authorize an adequate number of retail stores to ensure reasonable availability and convenient accessibility to WIC participants. The purpose of this policy is to identify the process the State Agency will use to accept retail store's applications, and to enroll, train, and support newly authorized stores.

The State Agency shall apply this policy to all types of stores seeking Virginia WIC Program authorization, (i.e., small independently owned retailers, chain retailers, pharmacies, and commissaries). Stores undergoing a *Change of Ownership* must apply for Program authorization based upon these same procedures.

B. PROCEDURE

1. REQUESTING AN APPLICATION PACKET

- a) The applicant requests an application packet in writing or walk-in.
- b) The State Agency will mail the application packet to the applicant. A copy of the Application and Enrollment Procedures and the Retailer Selection and Authorization policies will be sent as part of the application package. The applicant should keep both of these policies for future reference.
- c) The applicant will return the completed application packet (forms only) to the State Agency for review.
- d) Applicants who submit incomplete application forms or don't answer all requested questions might delay the State Agency's abilities to review and make selection decisions pertaining to their status.
- e) After completing the initial review of the completed application, the State Agency will send applicants selected for further authorization consideration, a WIC Program Retailer Selection and Training Letter.

2. MINIMUM STOCKING VISIT

- a) Applicants selected for further authorization consideration must pass an unannounced on-site minimum-stocking visit made by an Agency Representative. The State Agency typically conducts this visit within two weeks after it notifies the applicant that his/her store has met the **initial** selection qualifications of the Program.
- b) After passing the on-site visit, the Agency Representative shall provide the applicant with a starter packet of training materials. This packet includes the **Vendor Manual for the Virginia WIC Program**, Cashier Training Guide, *Working with WIC* video, window decals, WIC approved food lists, shelf labels, Training Test letter and Training Test #1.

3. **TRAINING**

- a) It is the applicant's responsibility to view the *Working with WIC* video that outlines basic Program requirements. This video gives an overview of the WIC Program, instructions on using the WIC approved food list, and check (food instrument) redemption procedures. This video also covers monitoring, training, support services available, the Sanction Classification System policy and penalties for non-compliance.
- b) After viewing this video, reading the **Vendor Manual for the Virginia WIC Program** and Cashier Training Guide, a responsible store representative (i.e., owner or manager) must complete a training test. The applicant must complete and return the self-administered training test within **30** calendar days after the on-site visit made by the Agency Representative. If the applicant fails to return the test within 15 calendar days, the State Agency will follow-up by telephone and allow an additional 15 calendar days to return the test.

If the applicant fails to return the training test within **30** calendar days after receiving written notification of his/her store's selection for authorization, then the State Agency will send a Denied Authorization Letter to the store.

- c) The applicant must meet the passing requirement identified in the training test packet before the State Agency makes a final decision on the store's authorization status.

If the applicant fails the training test, the State Agency shall give the applicant an opportunity to take a second test. The State Agency may deny authorization to applicants who fail the second version of the training test.

- d) It is the owner's or manager's responsibility to train all cashiers and staff on proper WIC procedures **within two weeks** after receiving an Authorization Status (final approval) Letter. If the applicant is unable to meet this timeframe, it is his/her responsibility to call his/her Agency Representative immediately. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the State Agency's withdrawal of its authorization decision.
- e) It is the applicant's responsibility to train **all** cashiers and staff on the proper WIC procedures. Support towards this effort is available from the State Agency, upon request. The applicant should make these arrangements, if desired, with the Agency support person assigned to the store. The State Agency's representative may be contacted to obtain additional training materials, training videos, tip cards, etc. Applicants should not accept any WIC checks until they have fully trained **all** staff in handling WIC transactions.

4. **FINAL AUTHORIZATION**

- a) An applicant must not accept WIC checks until **all** criterion listed below have been met:
- Pass the minimum stocking visit;
 - Pass the self-administered training test;
 - Receive an Authorization Status (final approval) Letter;
 - Receive a copy of the Agency **signed** Retailer Contract Application & Agreement Form;
 - Receive a WIC Program authorization stamp/number issued by the State Agency;
 - Properly train all staff handling WIC transactions.

- b) The State Agency expects newly authorized stores to begin accepting WIC checks **within two weeks**, after meeting all authorization requirements outlined in this policy. If a store will not be able to begin accepting WIC checks within two weeks after completing all Agency requirements, the store must notify the State Agency in writing of this delay. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the State Agency's withdrawal of its authorization decision.
- c) It is the applicant's responsibility to complete all necessary store level administrative procedures such as identifying WIC approved foods and programming registers to flag non-WIC items **within two weeks** after completing all other Agency requirements. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the State Agency's withdrawal of its authorization decision.

5. **PROBATIONARY STATUS**

- a) The State Agency shall consider all newly authorized retail stores as "*Probationary*" for a one-year period. This one-year period begins from the date the retail store receives the Authorization Status (final approval) Letter. During this period, the State Agency shall conduct increased monitoring and compliance investigations of these retail stores as outlined in the Monitoring Visit and the Sanction Classification System Policies.
- b) The State Agency may extend the probationary period as deemed appropriate based upon unsatisfactory monitoring (the assignment of 10 or more educational points) and compliance results. However, the State Agency may only extend the probationary period **once** for an additional six months. After the six-month extension period has expired, the State Agency will determine what administrative action it shall take (i.e., change of status or disqualify the retailer).
- c) After one year of continuous participation in the Virginia WIC Program, the State Agency expects newly authorized retailers to meet the ***minimum performance threshold*** as specified in the Retailer Selection and Authorization Policy (#14.0, Section III, Administrative Removal).

6. **APPLICATION DENIALS**

- a) If the applicant fails any Program requirement (i.e., minimum stocking visit, training, etc.) or General Requirement and Conditions outlined in the Retailer Contract Application and Agreement form, the State Agency shall provide written notification of these deficiencies and terminate the retail store's application. The applicant is eligible to reapply in six (6) months, after receiving this written notification.
- b) Applicants not selected for authorization will be sent a Denial Authorization Letter, plus a copy of the Retailer's (Vendor) Right of Appeal policy.

References:

- Application and Enrollment Checklist
- Change of Ownership of WIC Retail Stores Policy (12.0)
- Federal Regulations 7CFR Part 246.12
- Retailer Contract Agreement and Application form
- Retailer's (Vendor) Right of Appeal Policy (1.0)
- Retailer Selection and Authorization Policy (14.0)
- Minimum Food Stocking Requirement Policy (10.0)
- Monitoring Visits (8.0)
- Sanction Classification System Policy (15.0)

Virginia WIC Program APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

STEPS TO COMPLETE VA WIC AUTHORIZATION	Who	TIMETABLE	STATUS
1. Requests an application packet in writing.	Applicant	Various	Completed √
2. Completes all required forms and returns them to WIC.	Applicant	Various	
3. Reviews applications and determines <u>initial</u> selection qualifications.	WIC Program	Once per month. (2 nd wk of month)	
4. Sends letter to applicant acknowledging <u>initial</u> selection (if applicable).	WIC Program	2-3 business days.	
5. Makes an unannounced stocking visit, if selected. Provides starter packet to retailer, if store passes stocking requirements	WIC Program	Within 2 weeks of initial selection.	
6. Store owner/manager views the self-instructional video, Vendor Manual and other training materials. Completes and returns the WIC test by mail or fax. ➤ <i>(If applicant does not return the completed test within 2 weeks, WIC will follow up by telephone.)</i>	Applicant	Various (Should be within 2 weeks)	
7. Reviews the test and determines whether applicant has passed and makes final decision regarding authorization status. ➤ <i>(If applicant has not passed the test, WIC will send 2nd test – will cost the applicant an additional 2-3 weeks.)</i>	WIC Program	Within 2 business days.	
8. If applicant passes the test, sends a final authorization letter with signed Contract Agreement and WIC Authorization Stamp.	WIC Program	Within 1 week.	
9. Trains his/her cashiers and other staff regarding proper WIC procedures. ➤ <i>(If unable to complete training of staff within 2 weeks the retailer must notify WIC in writing.)</i>	Applicant	Should be within 2 weeks of final authorization.	
➤ <i>Must not accept any WIC checks until store has received WIC Authorization Stamp and all staff handling WIC checks are fully trained.</i>	Applicant	Total timetable for approval is 2-3 months, depending largely on the applicant.	
❖ <i>To monitor where you are in the application and enrollment process, we recommend you use this checklist. It might be helpful to record the date for those activities you are responsible for completing.</i>			